

## Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 INT-05 OIC-02 L-03 CIAE-00  
COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 SP-02  
AF-08 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10 TRSE-00 DODE-00  
PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SS-15 NSC-05 /119 W  
-----061354Z 083864 /47

R 061225Z APR 77

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6448

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O.11652: NA

TAGS: SGEN, SHUM, SOCI

SUBJECT: NGO CONFERENCE ON DISCRIMINATION AGAINST INDIGENOUS  
POPULATION IN THE AMERICAS

REF: A) USUN 0856, B) STATE 57069, C) GENEVA 1588

1. SUMMARY. MISSION REPORTS TWO RECENT DISCUSSIONS HERE  
WITH PARTIES WHO HAVE A DIRECT INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT  
CONFERENCE, IN THE BELIEF THEY MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN  
ESTABLISHING A U.S. POSTURE WITH RESPECT TO THIS MEET-  
ING. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING INFORMAL CONVERSATION RECENTLY WITH NIALL  
MACDERMOT (INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS),  
MISSOFF WAS TOLD THAT GOVERNMENTS WILL BE INVITED TO  
PARTICIPATE IN THE SEPTEMBER NGO CONFERENCE ON INDIGENEOUS  
POPULATIONS IN THE AMERICAS. HE URGED THAT THE U.S.  
SEND A DELEGATION OF AT LEAST THREE PERSONS, IF NOT  
MORE. THREE DELEGATES, HE SAID, WOULD PERMIT COVERAGE  
OF THE THREE CONFERENCE COMMITTEES: 1) CIVIL, POLITICAL  
AND LEGAL RIGHTS; 2) ECONOMIC RIGHTS, INCLUDING  
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TRADE UNIONS; AND 3) SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS.

3. IN ADDITION MACDERMOT SUGGESTED THAT THE BUREAU  
OF INDIAN AFFAIRS (BIA) MIGHT WISH TO SEND, FOR  
DISTRIBUTION DURING THE CONFERENCE, CONCISE DOCUMENTA-  
TION WHICH WOULD PRESENT A CLEAR PICTURE OF WHAT THE  
USG IS DOING IN THE AREA OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.

4. MACDERMOT EXPRESSED BEWILDERMENT OVER OPPOSITION TO THE CONFERENCE THEME ON THE PART OF SOME MEMBER STATES. HE NOTED THAT "MIGRANT WORKERS IN EUROPE" HAD BEEN THE THEME OF ONE CONFERENCE, "RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA" WAS THE SUBJECT OF ANOTHER CONFERENCE, AND "POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA" WAS THE TOPIC OF A THIRD NGO SESSION. EACH OF THESE MEETINGS IS A PART OF A SERIES OF CONFERENCES TO BE HELD DURING THE DECADE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION.

5. MACDERMOT VOLUNTEERED TO RAISE ANY QUESTIONS THAT THE U.S. MIGHT HAVE ABOUT THE CONFERENCE DURING THE NGO PLANNING/BOARD MEETING IN APRIL (REFA) IN AN EFFORT TO CLARIFY ANY RESERVATIONS WE MIGHT HAVE ABOUT THE THEME OR ANY OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SEPTMEBER SESSION.

6. MISOFF ALSO HAD OCCASION TO EXPLORE THIS ISSUE WITH MRS. ROSLYN HARRIS, FORMER PRESIDENT OF NGO, DURING HER RECENT VISIT TO GENEVA AS A CONSULTANT FOR THE FORD FOUNDATION. DURING MRS. HARRIS' NGO PRESIDENCY, SOME OF THE PROGRAMS FOR THE DECADE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION WERE PLANNED. IN AN EFFORT TO HAVE THE NGO'S CONSIDER RACISM IN GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS OTHER THAN SOUTHERN AFRICA, SHE SUGGESTED LOOKING AT THE SITUATION OF INDIGENOUS GROUPS AROUND THE WORLD, E.G., THE AINU OF JAPAN, THE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES OF AUSTRALIA, ETC. MUCH TO HER SURPRISE SHE RECEIVED A LIST OF TOPICS THAT INCLUDED MIGRANT WORKERS IN EUROPE.

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WHILE CONCEDING THAT THERE WAS PROBABLY DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MIGRANT LABORERS, SHE WAS UNABLE TO CONVINCE THE NGO'S THAT THE OVERRIDING PROBLEM IN THESE CASES APPEARED TO BE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IN NATURE.

7. MRS. HARRIS RECALLED THAT MRS. ANNABELLE WEINER (REFS A AND B) HAD APPROACHED HER REGARDING THE PROGRAM OF INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS IN THE AMERICAS, URGING THAT EFFORTS BE MADE TO HAVE THE CONFERENCE CANCELLED. MRS. HARRIS SAID SHE EXPRESSED HER OPINION THAT THE PROGRAM COULD NOT NOW BE CHANGED AND RECOMMENDED THAT, RATHER THAN FIGHT THE ISSUE, THE U.S. MIGHT WISH TO CONSIDER PRESENTING DURING THE SESSION EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS IN THIS AREA THAT HAS BEEN MADE IN THE UNITED STATES AMONG VARIOUS INDIAN TRIBES, SUCH AS WITH THE LAND ISSUE IN MAINE.

8. COMMENT: OBVIOUSLY BOTH MR. MACDERMOT AND MRS. HARRIS HAVE VESTED INTERESTS IN THE CONFERENCE,

AND THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD IT SHOULD NOT THERE-  
FORE BE TAKEN AS WHOLLY OBJECTIVE. NONETHELESS,  
AS INDIVIDUALS WITH CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE IN

NGO MATTERS, AND WELL DISPOSED TOWARD THE U.S.,  
THEIR VIEWS AND ADVICE SHOULD, IN OUR JUDGEMENT,  
BE GIVEN DUE CONSIDERATION. THREE COURSES OF  
ACTION APPEAR AVAILABLE TO US:

1) ATTACK THE CONFERENCE AND ESPECIALLY THE NARROWNESS  
OF ITS THEME. OUR ASSESSMENT IS THAT SUCH AN  
EFFORT WOULD STAND LITTLE CHANCE OF SUCCESS, AND  
WOULD PROBABLY BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. CERTAINLY  
WE CANNOT BLOCK THE CONFERENCE, AND IT IS HIGHLY  
DOUBTFUL THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO CONVINCE THE  
NGO'S TO BROADEN THE THEME TO ENCOMPASS OTHER REGIONS  
AS WELL. IN SUCH AN EFFORT WE COULD BE EXPOSED TO CHARGES  
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OF ATTEMPTING TO CONCEAL OR COVER UP HUMAN  
RIGHTS PROBLEMS IN THE UNITED STATES.

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2) IGNORE THE CONFERENCE AND REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE.

THIS COURSE HAS THE MERIT OF WITHHOLDING US  
OFFICIAL SANCTION OF THE MEETING, BUT WOULD  
PRECLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF EFFORTS TO KEEP THE  
RECORD STRAIGHT AND TO PRESENT POSITIVE ASPECTS OF  
US PROGRAMS IN THIS FIELD.

3) PARTICIPATE TO THE EXTENT THAT WE MIGHT, AND  
THAT WE CONSIDER APPROPRIATE. CRITICISM WOULD  
BE NO LESS HARSH THAN IT OTHERWISE WOULD BE,  
BUT WE WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REBUT AND TO  
OFFER SPECIFICS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT, AS CONTRASTED  
TO OPTION 2. ENGAGING IN OPEN DIALOGUE ON  
DOMESTIC HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES IN SUCH AN INTERNA-  
TIONAL FORUM WOULD BE CONSONANT WITH THE POSITION  
TAKEN BY THE ADMINISTRATION, AND REITERATED BY  
THE USDEL AT THE LAST HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
SESSION, THAT PROBLEMS IN THIS AREA  
WHEREVER THEY OCCUR ARE MATTERS OF INTERNATIONAL  
CONSCIENCE THAT CAN AND SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY  
THE WORLD COMMUNITY. IN PARTICIPATING, WE COULD  
ALSO DO OUR PART TO ASSURE THAT THE CONFERENCE  
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TREATS THE SUBJECT AS IT APLPLIES THROUGH OUT THE  
AMERICAS, AND THAT IT NOT TEND TO FOCUS EXCLUSIVELY  
ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE UNITED STATES.

9. ON BALANCE, THEREFORE, AND ASSUMING THERE ARE  
NO IMPEDIMENTS, SUCH AS RESTRICTIONS TO GOVERNMENTAL  
PARTICIPATION IN CONFERENCES OF THIS NATURE, THE  
MISSION WOULD VIEW OPTION 3 AT A MEASURED, APPROPRIATE  
LEVEL, AS EXPOSING THE FEWEST PITFALLS AND BEING  
MOST CONSISTENT WITH OUR ANNOUNCED POLICY IN THEIS  
AREA. END COMMENT.

10. THE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS AND GUIDANCE IN TREAT-  
ING THIS SUBJECT ARE REQUESTED. SHOULD THE  
DEPARTMENT WISH TO ACCEPT MACDERMOT'S OFFER IN  
PARA 5, ABOVE, QUESTIONS SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO  
THE MISSION NOT LATER THAN APRIL 26.SORENSEN

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## Message Attributes

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